

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 2, 6, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18, 19, 23, 26, 31, 36, 37, 39, 41, 45, 52, 53, 56-58, 66 and 67. Please cancel claims 5 and 63-65 without prejudice. Claim 30 was previously cancelled without prejudice. Please add new claims 70-72. Pending claims 1-4, 6-29, 31-62 and 66-72 follow.

1. (Currently Amended) A cooking apparatus for preparing a food item in a microwave oven, comprising:

a microwaveable housing,

a grill having a surface for supporting the food item thereon; and

a solid or semi-solid gelatinous ~~an~~ ingredient for ~~application to~~ the food item, wherein said gelatinous ~~the~~ ingredient is not extracted from the food item being prepared,

said grill-surface, said gelatinous ingredient, and the food item being contained within said microwaveable housing for heating in the microwave oven, said gelatinous ingredient being positioned below said grill ~~surface~~ so that when said gelatinous ingredient is heated, said gelatinous ingredient at least partially liquefies or melts from the solid or semi-solid state and generates steam, the steam from heating said ingredient being is applied to the food item.

2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, an interior surface of said microwaveable housing including a support member, said grill ~~surface~~ being placed on said support member.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, said microwaveable housing including a vent through which steam is released.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, said grill surface being coated with a metalized susceptor material.

5. (Canceled).

6. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, steam from heating said gelatinous ingredient including a flavoring ~~for~~ that is applied to the food item.
7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6, the flavoring comprising a charcoal flavoring.
8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6, the flavoring comprising a beef flavoring.
9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6, the flavoring comprising a barbeque flavoring.
10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6, the flavoring comprising a lemon flavoring.
11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, steam from heating said gelatinous ingredient including an aroma ~~for~~ that is applied to the food item.
12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, steam from heating said gelatinous ingredient including a coloring ~~for~~ that is applied to the food item.
13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, the coloring comprising a caramel coloring.
14. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, the apertures defined by said grill ~~surface~~ being arranged ~~positioned~~ so that a liquid from the ~~said~~ heated food item passes through the apertures to a bottom section of said microwaveable housing.

15. (Currently Amended) A microwave cooking apparatus for preparing a food item in a microwave oven, comprising:

a microwaveable housing having a lower housing section and an upper housing section;

a support member in said lower housing section;

a grill having a surface for supporting the food item thereon, said grill ~~surface~~-defining a plurality of apertures and being placed on said support member; and

a gelatinous ingredient for the food item, wherein said gelatinous ingredient is not extracted from the food item being prepared,

said gelatinous ingredient being located in said lower housing section and below said grill ~~surface~~ so that steam from heating said gelatinous ingredient is applied to the food item through the apertures of said grill ~~surface~~.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising a connector that couples said lower and upper microwave housing sections together.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 16, said connector comprising a flexible connector.

18. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 15, said support members comprising a ridge extending from an interior surface of said lower housing section, said grill ~~grilling surface~~ being placed on said ridge.

19. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 15, said support members comprising a plurality of base members extending ~~up~~ upwardly from an interior bottom surface of said lower housing section.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, said upper housing section defining a vent aperture through which steam is released.

21. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising a vent attached to a top surface of said upper housing section, said vent defining one or more vent apertures through which steam can be released.
22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, said vent being adjustable.
23. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 15, liquid from the heated food item passing downwardly down through the plurality of apertures and into said lower housing section.
24. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, said grill surface being coated with a susceptor material.
25. (Original) The apparatus of claim 24, said susceptor material comprising a metalized susceptor material.
26. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 24, said susceptor material being selected so that said ~~grilling~~ grill surface reaches a sufficiently high temperature and marks the food item with a pattern of said grill surface.
27. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, steam from said gelatinous ingredient being applied to a bottom surface of the food item.
28. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, steam from said gelatinous ingredient being diffused onto to the food item.
29. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, said gelatinous ingredient being positioned in a reservoir formed in said lower housing section.
30. (Previously Canceled).

31. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 15, steam from heating said gelatinous ingredient including a flavoring ~~for~~ that is applied to the food item.
32. (Original) The apparatus of claim 31, the flavoring comprising a charcoal flavoring.
33. (Original) The apparatus of claim 31, the flavoring comprising a beef flavoring.
34. (Original) The apparatus of claim 31, the flavoring comprising a barbeque flavoring.
35. (Original) The apparatus of claim 31, the flavoring comprising a lemon flavoring.
36. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 31, steam from heating said gelatinous ingredient ~~sauce~~ including an aroma ~~for~~ that is applied to the food item.
37. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 31, steam from heating said gelatinous ingredient including a coloring ~~for~~ that is applied to the food item.
38. (Original) The apparatus of claim 37, the coloring comprising a caramel coloring.

39. (Currently Amended) A packaged food product for heating in a microwave oven, comprising:

a microwaveable housing having a lower housing section and an upper housing section;

a support member located in said lower housing section;

a food item;

a grill ~~surface~~ defining a plurality grill apertures and having a surface for supporting said food item thereon, said grill surface being placed on said one or more support member-members;
and

a gelatinous ingredient for said food item, wherein said gelatinous ingredient is not extracted from the food item being prepared,

said gelatinous ingredient being located in said lower housing section and below said grill surface,

said microwaveable housing including said food item, said grill ~~surface~~, said gelatinous ingredient, said support member, ~~and a vent~~, said gelatinous ingredient being heated in the microwave oven so that steam from said heated gelatinous ingredient rises through the plurality of apertures of said grill ~~surface~~ and onto said heated food item.

40. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, said support member comprising a ridge extending from an interior surface of said lower housing section.

41. (Currently Amended) The packaged food product of claim 39, said support member comprising a plurality of base members extending ~~up~~ upwardly from an interior bottom surface of said lower housing section.

42. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, further comprising a vent in one of the housing sections, said vent defining an aperture, wherein the steam is released through the vent aperture.

43. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 42, said upper housing including said vent comprising a vent defined by said upper housing section.
44. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 42, said vent being attached to a top surface of said top housing section.
45. (Currently Amended) The packaged food product of claim 39, wherein liquid from heating said food item drips down through the plurality of apertures defined by said grill surface and into said lower housing section.
46. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, said grill surface being coated with a metalized susceptor material.
47. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, said gelatinous ingredient being positioned in a reservoir in a bottom of said lower housing section.
48. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, further comprising an inert gas, said inert gas being added into said microwaveable housing, and said microwaveable housing being sealed with said food item, said gelatinous ingredient, said grill surface, and said inert gas therein.
49. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, said microwaveable housing being sealed and evacuated of air.
50. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, said food item being beef, chicken, pork or a vegetable.
51. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, further comprising a connector that couples said lower and upper microwave housing sections together.

52. (Currently Amended) The packaged food product of claim 51 ~~50~~, said connector comprising a flexible connector.

53. (Currently Amended) A method of preparing a food item in a microwave oven, comprising:

providing a microwaveable housing, a grill having a surface for supporting the food item thereon and defining grill apertures, a food item, and a gelatinous ingredient for the food item, wherein the gelatinous ingredient is not extracted from the food item being prepared, the grill surface, the gelatinous ingredient, and the food item being contained within the microwaveable housing; and

arranging the food item on the grill surface so that the gelatinous ingredient is positioned in a reservoir of the microwaveable housing below the grill ~~surface~~; and

heating the microwaveable housing, the grill ~~surface~~, the food item, and the gelatinous ingredient with the microwave oven so that steam from the heated gelatinous ingredient rises through the grill apertures and onto the food item.

54. (Original) The method of claim 53; further comprising releasing steam in the microwaveable housing through a vent defined in a top surface of the microwaveable housing.

55. (Original) The method of claim 53, further comprising, before heating, applying a metalized susceptor layer to the grill surface so that when the grill surface is sufficiently heated, the food item is marked with a pattern of the heated grill surface.

56. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 53, steam from the heated gelatinous ingredient including a flavoring ~~for~~ that is applied to the food item.

57. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 53, steam from the heated gelatinous ingredient including a scent or an aroma ~~for~~ that is applied to the food item.

58. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 53, steam from the heated gelatinous ingredient including a coloring ~~for~~ that is applied to the food item.
59. (Previously Added). The apparatus of claim 1, the ingredient having a defined shape.
60. (Previously Added). The apparatus of claim 15, the gelatinous ingredient having a defined shape.
61. (Previously Added). The packaged food product of claim 39, the gelatinous ingredient having a defined shape.
62. (Previously Added). The method of claim 53, providing the gelatinous ingredient comprising providing a gelatinous ingredient having a defined shape.
63. (Canceled).
64. (Canceled).
65. (Canceled).
66. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, said gelatinous ingredient being positioned on a bottom surface of the microwaveable ~~microwave~~ housing.
67. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 39 ~~3,9~~ the gelatinous ingredient being positioned on a bottom surface of the lower housing section.
68. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 15, the gelatinous ingredient being positioned on a bottom surface of the lower housing section.

69. (Previously Added) The method of claim 53, the gelatinous ingredient being positioned on a bottom surface of the microwaveable housing.

70. (New) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said gelatinous ingredient is heated and at least partially liquefies or melts from a solid or semi-solid state and generates steam.

71. (New) The packaged food product of claim 39, wherein said gelatinous ingredient is heated and at least partially liquefies or melts from a solid or semi-solid state and generates steam.

72. (New) The method of claim 53, wherein said gelatinous ingredient is heated and at least partially liquefies or melts from a solid or semi-solid state and generates steam.